№ 7551.124

GIVEN BY

Miss C. W. Faucon.

A

SERMON

7551.124

PREACHED AT THE INSTALLATION OF

REV. SAMUEL KIRKLAND LOTHROP,

AS PASTOR OF THE

CHURCH IN BRATTLE SQUARE, BOSTON,

JUNE 18, 1834.

BY J. G. PALFREY, A. M.,
Professor of Biblical Literature in the University of Cambridge.

BOSTON:
NATHAN HALE...14 WATER STREET.

1834.

Dupl. of No. 4 in 5460a. 84

Miss C. W. Lawton,

Mar. 6, 1899.

JOSEPH H. LOW, PRINTER.

At a meeting of the Standing Committee of the "Church in Brattle Square," holden on Wednesday, the eighteenth day of June,

Voted, That this Committee, in the name and behalf of the Society, present their thanks to the Rev. Professor PALFREY, for his learned, appropriate, and interesting Sermon, this day delivered at the Installation of the Rev. S. K. LOTHROP, and request a copy for the press.

Voted, That this Committee, for the Society, acknowledge the great satisfaction they derived from the instructive and impressive Charge delivered by the Rev. JAMES WALKER, and the affectionate and comprehensive Discourse of the Rev. NATHANIEL L. FROTHINGHAM, in presenting the Fellowship of the Churches, and that they be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

Voted, That Messrs. James T. Austin, Nathan Hale, and Thomas P. Cushing be requested to transmit these votes to the Rev. Gentlemen above named, and, in case of their compliance, that they be requested to superintend the printing and distributing of the same.

A true copy of record.

Attest, IVERS J. AUSTIN, *Proprietors' Clerk.*

[*Letter from the above Committee to Mr. Palfrey.*]

Boston, 18th June, 1834.

Rev. and dear Sir,

We are directed by the Standing Committee, acting in behalf of the Church in Brattle Square, to present you their thanks for the learned, appropriate, and interesting Sermon this day delivered by you at the Installation of the Rev. S. K. LOTHROP, and to request a copy for publication. We beg leave to assure you of the personal pleasure we have in making this communication, and the satisfaction we shall derive by your permitting us to add this to the many favors for which our Society gratefully acknowledges its obligations.

With great regard and esteem, your sincere friends,

(Signed,) JAMES T. AUSTIN,
NATHAN HALE,
THOMAS P. CUSHING.

Rev. Professor PALFREY.

[*Mr. Palfrey's Answer to the above Letter.*]

Cambridge, 21st June, 1834.

Gentlemen,

I submit to your disposal the Sermon preached on the late occasion of strong interest to us all; and, begging you to accept my thanks for the gratifying manner in which you have conveyed to me the desire of your Committee to that effect,

I am, Gentlemen, with high personal regard,
Your friend and servant,

J. G. PALFREY.

To Messrs. J. T. AUSTIN,
N. HALE,
T. P. CUSHING,
} *Committee of the Church in Brattle Square.*

The Rev. Mr. WALKER declined giving a copy of his Charge for publication, for reasons which he informed the Committee had uniformly induced him, for some years past, when asked to print such performances, to decline doing it.

SERMON.

2 Corinthians, ii. 16.

WHO IS SUFFICIENT FOR THESE THINGS?

In making some remarks on the demands and responsibilities of the office to which this day's solemnity calls our attention, I would endeavor, my friends, to avoid a style of exaggerated statement, in which we may have sometimes known the subject treated. I have no idea, that the work of the ministry is a work of peculiar hardship. On the contrary, it appears to me, among labors destined to be accomplished by an elevated and constant purpose, to be rather distinguished for the alleviations, encouragements, pleasures, which attend every step of its prosecution. I have no idea that it is an undertaking to be shrunk from, as if failure in it were exceedingly probable, and exceedingly dangerous. Complete failure in it is by no means probable, if it be engaged

in with the proper spirit; and, as to its danger, as often and as far as failure is the actual result, it is dangerous in the ministry, as it is dangerous in other walks of important action, or rather of any action. If it have come to pass not through our negligence, but our unhappiness, and the uncontrollable force of adverse circumstances, God knows that it did so, and he does not hold us accountable for it, as if it had been our sin. If failure in the endeavors, which in every sphere of action, and according to the proportion of our capacities, we owe, and cannot help owing, to the great cause of God and man, have resulted through our unfaithfulness, we must not expect to escape the divine displeasure and its consequences, because our chosen sphere was not the christian ministry. The powers and privileges with which our Creator has been pleased to endow us, and not the place in which we may have employed them, make the measure of our duty to the world, and our accountableness to him; and, on the great day of sentence, the lawyer, and the farmer, and the merchant, and the mechanic, and the mother, wife and daughter, will all have to shew, as much as the minister, that they meant well in their several places, and according to their several capacities and opportunities, did well. Paul indeed asks, looking over the extraordinarily

wide range of his allotted labors, who is sufficient for these things? But he did not mean, who, laboring in the best use of his own powers, and with those aids of God's grace which he has promised to his servants, is sufficient to acquit himself of his task so as to secure God's approbation. He meant to ask, who is able to do all, which it is desirable to see done, of so vast and critical a work. And this is a question, which Christ's ministers now have constant occasion to consider. But here appears a reason, not why any, competently disposed and qualified, should withhold themselves from the work, but why many more should take it up. Competently disposed and qualified, I say; for I am not arguing, contrary to all truth, that a man is not responsible for his choice of a place in life, as well as for his action in it. In choosing a place in life, we are to have regard to our personal adaptation to the kind of service it imposes. Among such as desire God's glory and men's good, the christian ministry demands the self-consecration of those, whose minds have a capacity, from original structure and from discipline, of acting on the minds of others. Such are the fit agents for its work; and such are not to be discouraged from it by the thought, that to do the whole of what its work contemplates, is something to which no man and no men are com-

petent. Sufficiency, indeed, is not for men. Partial failure, in any great work, every man will look for, who is wise; for we are not almighty, nor all-knowing, and complete results are for God, who is so. But partial failure is also partial success; and though we are by no means to be content with imperfect successes, so as not constantly to labor to render them less imperfect, yet, on the other hand, he who should avoid a place of duty, till he was satisfied of his sufficiency to do all the service he could find there to be done, would, if he had any just notion of the claims which duty makes, be long in finding his fit place of duty in God's world.

But if there be inexactness and exaggeration in statements of this character, which we sometimes hear, it must be owned that erroneous views on the subject, of an opposite tenor, are more common. Is it not true, that the expression of the idea, that the ministry is a work of that magnitude that a man may question his sufficiency to undertake it, is apt to be received with a degree of incredulity, as it would not be received, for instance, if one were speaking of the tasks of magistracy? Would it be stating the case too strongly, to assert the prevalence, to no small extent, of an impression, that the christian ministry is a place where inactivity and dulness may be more safely dis-

posed of, than in many other places? Should I be unauthorized to say, that many a parent thinks, if he has sent the most unenterprising and incapable of his educated sons, into the ministry, that he has found for him his most appropriate post? I fear that these statements respecting a sentiment actually prevailing, would not be too strong; and I fear more, that for its degree of currency, the clergy themselves are not free from responsibility. Partly, among other causes, from utterly false notions of official prerogative and consequence, leading to a lax sense of the indispensableness of personal endeavor to the maintainance of a reputable standing, and partly from a not altogether unnatural, however blameable, presuming upon the deference which the religious mind inclines to pay to the expounders of its faith, the clergy, especially where they have belonged to an establishment, have too often, I suppose, indulged themselves in an inefficiency, which has helped to give this character to their office. To speak of the case as it has existed among ourselves, the Congregational ministry, till a recent period, were essentially, as respects the purpose of these remarks, a kind of establishment here; and I apprehend it must be owned, that, after the first century of peculiar excitement, they began to give evidence of the danger, to which I have referred as

affecting their situation. In this declining state other circumstances found them, of a nature to divert their minds' chief attention from their proper business, and speed the already growing evil; so that, at least through the half century, from the beginning of the political agitations which led to our revolutionary contest, down to the time when a so far most beneficent controversy began to stir the stagnant pool, I suppose it must be granted, that, with highly honorable exceptions, of which we have cause to thank God that some yet survive among us, the Congregational clergy were, considering their obligations and advantages, an exceedingly imbecile class of men. From the sectaries, whom the demand for more zeal had raised up in the midst of them, they were in the habit of distinguishing themselves, as the learned clergy; but this was rather a traditional than a well-founded actual distinction, nor was it by any means so clear, that they excelled the sectaries in learning, as that the latter excelled them in devotion to the practical labors of a minister's proper work, and in the successful study of arts to address the mind; so that finally there grew up a state of feeling in respect to them, not yet departed, which, had it expressed itself frankly, would have often led the observing layman to address his pastor in some such terms, as these.

'I sometimes hear you,' he would say, 'ask in the desk, referring to your office, who is sufficient for these things? If you will have a candid answer, it shall be, that I conceive almost any body, well schooled, is sufficient for them. The pressing business of which you speak, as you discharge it, seems mainly to consist in repeating, week by week, a many times told tale, without so much of novelty as would be found in the natural expression of successively revived convictions of its importance. Your mind is not in energetic action, like that of others about us, who had early advantages like yours, and who are now in pursuit of objects, apparently in their own nature less exciting. You do not even subject it to very much of the culture which books afford. I do not find that you habitually feed it with much more nourishing aliment of this sort, than is to be found in occasional sermons and religious magazines. I see, in your daily engagements, no very strenuous application of your powers. You are a courted companion at rich men's feasts; and, in other circles, you are an agreeable and not imprudent circulator of the village news. As to your private example, you are a harmless, but a timid, unenterprising man; and if other great objects besides religion, had to be helped on by such as you, I am not sure that they would prosper better. You do not take

much lead in forming public sentiment, and directing moral action, in your neighborhood. You are exceedly patient of many sorts of error, particularly if it be favored in high quarters. If it be not so, point to some impression which you have made on the impressible mass around you. Show some fruit of those labors, in a prominent sphere, which, if this description be not correct, have been employing you. Who is sufficient for the things which you do? I am almost tempted rather to ask, who is not sufficient.'

I may seem to you to have represented strongly, my hearers, impressions entertained in some quarters respecting the christian ministry. If so, I will only ask you to make from the representation such abatement as you may see cause for making, and then reply, whether views, having some similarity to what have been described, do not to some extent prevail. And now let us turn from the ministry, as, in its actual exercise, any may have supposed that they had witnessed it to be, to the ministry, as the reasons of the case demand of every conscientious man that he should make it, to see whether or not it is an office, which finds scope for the best powers, and offers attractions to the loftiest ambition.

I am at a loss how to approach my subject, in such a diversity of aspects of strong interest does it spread

itself out before me. But let us glance, first, at the action of the minister's mind on other individual minds, as seen in the speedy production of beneficent results. In his charge, there are young people. The soul of every one of them is an aggregation of those capacities and sensibilities, which working out their effects, have made up, and are to make up, all that is most blessed and most fearful in human destiny. Every one of them, should God spare him here long enough, (and if otherwise, the alternative is but of the more urgent interest,) is to be, in his degree, a happy, useful, and honored, or a worthless, despised, wretched man, according as the love of duty, or devotion to base objects shall come to reign in his heart. There are aged people. Their age will be a season of miserable vacancy, hopelessness, and discontent, or else all inward cheerfulness and peace, and their approaching departure will be a reluctant surrender of what, little as it satisfied them, was all they had learned to prize, or else a quiet return of the spirit to its father's home, according to the discipline to which their spirits are even now subjected. There are prosperous people. Their prosperity is all hollowness, it utters its loud hourly contradiction to the name by which it is called, unless the mind have had that culture, which gives to outward

advantages a title to the name. There are afflicted people. Affliction is merely torture to the undevout soul; to him who has learned of Jesus, there comes along with it a peace of God, which passeth the inexperienced understanding. There are parents. With the degree of wisdom and faithfulness, with which now they shall be prompted to execute their trust, is most intimately connected the character, both for worthiness and enjoyment, of the lives which they cherish, as they do their own. I do not go on with the enumeration. I do not undertake to name many, even of the most apparent forms, under which the varieties of human experience might be found to range themselves. But there is no man, of all the human mass around us, the record of whose inward life, if it could be written out at length, would not touch us more, with its complexities and its contrasts of joy and sorrow, than all that we have read most moving in real or fictitious history. And the one thing which is to be looked to, to determine in each case the momentous issue presented by the earthly life, is the presence or the absence of the faith of Jesus in its power. Should the blessings of this faith, then, be communicated in their fulness, through a minister's agency, to a single mind, I submit, whether, the happiness of a single human creature being a substantial

and complicated result, a great action would not have been done, a vast benefit been conferred. But there are many individuals comprehended in each of these classes, within a minister's sphere of agency, and there are many more classes than I have specified. I am not implying that whatever of this all-important direction and impulse, they find any where, is to be derived from their minister. Far from it. But still he has seriously to ask himself, whether it is not, in great part, his own fault, when, if so disposed, or if not resolutely so disposed, they do not owe something of it to his endeavors. Week by week he has the ear of all, while other cares are laid aside, to give him the better opportunity to occupy their minds. Many come to him, craving supply for the wants of their spirits; many, if he have not been greatly faulty or unfortunate, disposed by the force of personal attachment, to a favorable reception of what he may address to them; most, inclined to listen with attention and candor, from respect for the place and his office. What a singular, what a precious opportunity, for the formal exposition of principles of sentiment and conduct, which he knows to be always in season, or to have, from peculiar occasions which arise, any peculiar applicability and worth. Also, he has access to the people of his charge, such as others have not,

on those uncommon occasions, when their minds are most open, and their hearts are most tender; and then, and at other times, there are many, who are more than willing to receive whatever he may reasonably or affectingly say, in the way of counsel, of sympathy, of encouragement, even of remonstrance. Thus circumstanced, shall a minister, looking at any one of his people, not see occasion to say, that in his relation to that individual, he has a great work in hand? And shall any one of the people, looking at their minister, not find cause to own, that they have trusted him with a great power, and that, if he is using it well, they have in him a great benefactor? God forbid, my friends, that we should not rate high every worthy employment of the faculties, especially every service rendered by man to man. All right application of the mind is admirable. All benevolent application of it, especially so. But, while I am grateful to him who has been the divine instrument in raising me or mine from sickness, or who defends our liberties and property in the administration of the law, shall I not allow that my minister too has been doing something which concerns me nearly, if, faithful in his lot, I owe to him any thing of what I have enjoyed in life's relations and my own more intimate consciousness; if he has done any thing towards

making my parent a good parent, my child a good child, my neighbor a good neighbor; if his influence has availed aught towards fulfilling my best wishes for those dear to me as the light that visits my eyes, as the current that throbs through my heart; if I owe to him any thing of the clearness and firmness of my faith, any supports and guides of my patient continuance in well-doing, any thing of my simplicity in purpose, and courage and confidence in action, of the meekness and humility which escape for me so many snares, and quiet for me so many tumults of spirit, any of the well-merited praise of men, any of the far more coveted praise of God? Did I commit a light charge to him whom I invited to attempt for me something of this nature? If his endeavor has had any success, shall I say that he has well accomplished a little business, and entitled himself to a little gratitude at my hands? And if he has done something of this nature for many others as well as for myself, shall I give place to the idea, that he might otherwise have been employed in operations more respectable, accomplishing results of some more considerable kind, and winning for himself truer honor?

No, my hearers, I make no disparaging comparisons between this and other callings, but sure I am

you will agree with me, that he who has done something of this sort has not been engaged in an ignoble service, and that he, who, in the place of which we speak, has not endeavored something of it, challenges your contempt, not for his calling, but for his character. But, secondly, let us observe what is the instrument of a minister's proper action, that we may see whether there is any possible influence of his on the character of society, and the course of events which make up the world's history, as well as upon the fortunes of that invisible world which is enclosed in every human bosom. That instrument is religious truth; in other words, moral truth in its highest department, and standing on its highest evidence. And moral truth is no other than the great instrument of those conquests, the benefit and the fame of which are to last. By his office, I repeat it, that is, by the facilities of his office, the minister is one of those who are to wield the power, which at length has made itself recognised as the divinely appointed superintendent of human concerns. Time was, in the lowest state of civilization which letters record, when physical qualities were accounted the elements of power, and claimed for themselves an estimation accordingly. The robust Entellus, the swiftfooted Achilles, were the highest specimens of human nature

of those ages. In intellectual distinctions, as society advanced, next were sought the signatures of greatness; but already we have gone far in a transition to the juster view, that moral power is the endowment the noblest for its possessor, and the most efficient in the production of memorable results; the self-same power which it belongs peculiarly to the minister to exert and to create. It is his, then, according to the proportion of his abilities, to labor, in these more auspicious modern times, in that great work in which the sages of all time, the men whom of all men we most venerate, have labored, the investigation and establishment of truth suited to affect human character and condition, and the application of it to the production of those results, which, faithfully applied, it is omnipotent to produce. He, precisely like them, is to think and write for the honor and spread of truth, and the advancement of human nature. He may be able to do it with far less power than those great lights of the ages. But we are now speaking of the capacities of the vocation, not of the capacities of the man; and if what we have been affirming here is just, the powers, which should match the highest that human annals record, would find ample, and free, and unoccupied range for like exercise, in this field. Shall I add that the

christian minister, according to the custom of his office, has a great practical advantage, in bringing truth to bear directly on the mind, over those who have but stored up their weighty thoughts in books? All human experience has taught the lesson, that there is no vehicle of thought which has a power of penetration like the human voice; and accordingly this is the way, in which men have always sought to address each other on occasions of high personal concern. So too the christian minister addresses those, whom he would attract to the reception of truth, and the practice of goodness. He does not write them a letter, if I may so speak, to be coldly read in a listless solitude; for a book is but its author's communication by letter to its reader's mind; but he goes and looks them in the face, and demands entrance into their hearts, in tones to which, if they knock hard enough, the heart is not so made as to refuse admission. He may do his errand unskilfully, but, if to little purpose, it will not be because his message is not a sublime one, and his opportunity all that heart can desire.

If these things be so, then, in respect even to real power, and consequence, and control over earthly events, (for here I am speaking of no more,) I would ask, whether it is possible to rank the sacred office, exercised as it may be, (and if not so exercised it is

not the fault of the office,) elsewhere than among the highest which man sustains. If, especially in this country and age, whatever thing the mass of a community can be strongly persuaded should be done, we may be sure will be done, and if the principles which are to determine that choice, and the mental habits and tastes which are to make it, are precisely the matters of the minister's professional cognizance, is he the man who is professionally in no condition to make the country, and the age, and posterity, his debtor? I know I shall be told that it does not belong to him to make any showy exhibitions of power, thus manifesting his consequence to his own view and that of others; and herein is a sophism involving much of the current error on the subject. It is so, no doubt. The majesty of the state does not invest his person. He cannot arrest a legal provision, nor negotiate a treaty. He cannot sign a pardon, nor a death warrant, nor so much as a commission. His uttered will is not instantly decisive of some large interest, nor, when he moves the minds of others the most vehemently, does he move them to any present and conspicuous result. Whether or not there is some sufficient compensation for this want of immediate testimony and encouragement to his efforts, we may see under the next head. Mean-

while, I have something further so say upon the statement, as far as it has gone. The judge, upon the bench, when the august will of the law is declaring itself through his lips, and its ready satellites are waiting round him, is the object of the crowd's most admiring wonder; and the statesman, while he speaks the mighty words, that solve some ill-boding perplexity, and end some high debate. But I do not know that the scene even of highest triumph to either, is the public scene, or whether it is not another, where the teacher of religion is at home as much as they. I am apt to think that the mere sense of power is not always, if generally, so intense and glorious with the judge, when the insignia of dominion are around him, and the mute veneration of the throng is more expressive than would be their most boisterous applause, as when in his solitary chamber, by his late or his early lamp, he has found his way, in strong meditation, to the principle, where he may rest what he is going to announce on a basis of everlasting justice, ascertaining that the simple right is done in the case between man and man, and showing others the way to do the like right after him; and I own I envy not the political champion nearly so much the consciousness of that moment, when his overpowering accents are rolling on the captivated ear, as

when in his closet, unwitnessed, unpraised, unmissed, unthought of, he has just thought out the glowing, burning, all radiant illustration, which he feels, when brought forth in its place, is to make the truth triumphant, the people prosperous, and the rulers wise. I doubt not, my friends, that if such great men were to confide to us their experience, we should learn that their profoundest consciousness of power had been in scenes and moments, when it may equally belong to those, who may not exert it in the same conspicuous places, nor in the same present and manifest achievements, that, at other times, they do. The wise and good man, (for all such make one brotherhood, and it is folly to speak of their different forms of labor, as marking any thing but various subdivisions under the same class,) has, so far, equal delight, and equal consciousness of a lofty vocation, when he conceives a thought which he feels is to work mightily for good, whether he is directly to deliver it from a tribunal or in a hall of council, to write it on the parchments of a public office, to send it forth in a book, or ascend with it the pulpit stairs. And he, who is capable of feeling, and has been privileged to attain, this enjoyment, who is assured that under the care of providence, which does not suffer such things to be lost, something that he has righteously

and wisely thought and written or said, is sooner or later to prosper in the thing whereunto he sent it, is not likely to be much annoyed by the thought, if so it should be, that when the developement shall come, there will be no crowd looking on to recognize and applaud the doer.

But I must tear myself away from this part of my subject. I will only suggest the question, whether, partial as history yet is, by force of false ancient models, to the selection of the worst materials, and accordingly holding up, through all its chapters, a perpetual libel on human nature, moral exploits are not henceforward, in the improved state of intelligence, to be a way to attract something more of her notice; whether it is not likely, that there will come some age, which, looking back upon ours, for instance, will rate as highly the campaigns of Wilberforce as the campaigns of Wellington, holding the deliverance of some races by the high action of a mind under the most unequivocal impulses, to be of as much account as the demolition, for however good cause, of some armies? And, my hearers, look at the lessons which history reads us of the effects which religion has wrought as an engine or opponent of the state; for in that connexion history does consent to take notice of its agency; and then say, whether it can possibly

be regarded as a sluggish element in society. Great things doubtless has it wrought, great things relating to fortunes of empires, even when divested of its distinctive and most commanding power by the errors which were blended with it, and dissociated from its natural alliance with all that is soundest in human reason, and most quickening to human hearts. Great things, again, have been done by the power of the native moral sense, unaided by the advantages which revealed religion offers for its confirmation and guidance. What will not be done, of all which we should most desire to see done, when these powers shall come to act vigorously and extensively in concert, as God meant they should act? Has the world no deep stake, then, in his labors, whose business is to woo them so to act, and guide them while so acting? And if, with enlightened views, and that devoted purpose which a due sense of the magnificence of their task would awaken, a body of men, so numerous as the christian clergy, were employed, each in his own sphere, in engaging, maintaining, and directing them in such joint operation, through the agency of all whom each minister could directly or remotely influence, how would such a company move on the world. How little room would they be leaving for the question, whether or not they had undertaken a work, for

which the highest powers were more than sufficient, or the highest honor more than deserved.

I have dwelt the longer on these considerations, because they have the advantage of bringing well-understood human experience, in a greater or less degree, to the aid of the argument I am maintaining. In other respects, they admit no favorable comparison with that, which I am last to suggest, and in which the distinctive dignity of the sacred office is brought before the view. 'You paint slowly and carefully,' said some one to a great master of art. 'I do,' he replied, 'for I am making a work for immortality.' What he said inexactly, the christian minister may say in the most accurately literal language, of every line and color which he spreads on the imperishable canvass of a human soul. To conceive of all that is comprehended in this truth, is an exercise for faith, no doubt. But the whole of it consists of the simplest and most unquestionable inferences, from a faith held by every one, who considers the christian ministry worth supporting.

I know, my hearers, that all honest action is happy action; and the more happy, the more successful it has been in accomplishing the object at which it aimed. But doubtless, by force of all the reasons of the case, the more permanent the interests which

such action is designed to touch, the more quickening and happy it may be expected to be found. I know, that, in an important sense, every worthy result attained has a right to be called a permanent result, because it cannot fail to have some enduring relations to human character. But still it must be owned, that it is only indirectly, that many forms of labor, even in the liberal pursuits of life, contemplate effects that are to endure; and herein, in this transitoriness of what they propose to win, is to be acknowledged, so far, an essential meanness, (unsatisfactoriness, at least,) in such pursuits, from which the pursuits of the christian ministry are altogether exempt. When the art of healing has done its blessed work, and a useful life is saved, and anxious friends made happy, the object of their gratitude still feels that he has to say, 'I have but been doing, under God, a work which must soon be undone. The body, to which I ministered, lives and is strong again. But I have but been the divine instrument to put off its doom. Before long, the sentence will certainly go forth, which neither I nor any man will have power to change.' The minister of the law, when he has the most faithfully discharged his function for my benefit, is reminded that he has but been protecting for me a property, which presently I shall have to sur-

render again, or a liberty, which, had he failed, death, the great emancipator, would not have been long in bringing. The merchant accumulates, perceiving, if he is wise, that he has no ground for confident expectation that his wealth is to be eventually even a short-lived good to them who are next to receive it from his hands, as well as that, in all the common chances of the future, it will not descend far in the line in which he shall bequeath it; and the statesman's best labors are after all for the prosperity of empires, which, no more than the material monuments of brass and stone they raise to their benefactor's glory, are to have any continued existence beyond the present world. Is not the ministry here seen to stand on a high ground of distinguishing dignity? The only work done by the mightiest men, which is to last forever, is work done upon the human soul; and precisely and exclusively this work is what the ministry undertakes to do. It has no ultimate objects among things which perish. In every case where it has well done its office, it has reared, I repeat it, an everlasting trophy. And here is the thousand-fold compensation, of which I spoke, for one alleged deficiency in the triumphs which a minister's labors may achieve. If they are not immediate and conspicuous, like some others, they are abiding, as none of a different sort

are, and they are destined forever to grow. Friends, is it true that the permanence of effects contemplated is one of the standards, by which we should estimate the relative consideration of labors for securing them; and shall we not own that the ministry makes some claim for effective labors? Brethren in the ministry, have we felt all the greatness of our vocation, as it is revealed to us by the thought, that the work we may have well done is to stand and be built upon higher and higher forever, till the structure, of which, under God, we have laid the foundation, is lofty enough to fatigue an angel's ken? We do not know what the human soul, in its vast future self-evolutions, is to become; but we know, that it is never to lose its present consciousness, and that the elements of its ever growing greatness are to be the self-same which here have been put together, and watched over in their immaturity. And, besides quickening our zeal on the ground of high obligation so exhibited, has this consideration interested our affections in our work and its objects, to the degree it should have done? What I now mean is, that when I make an exertion or sacrifice for my child or for my friend, I am excited by the thought, among others, that I am thereby making myself the dearer to him; that I am establishing another claim on his good-will, while I

manifest, and at the same time confirm, my own friendly sentiments; and that our future intercourse together will be, on this account, so much the more intimate, affectionate, confiding, and happy, as long as continued life shall allow to us each others' friendship. Shall the minister not be animated by the thought, that they, whose spiritual interests he may have served, will still gratefully own him for their friend in their eternal life, and feel and acknowledge only more and more gratefully the worth of the kindness he had done them, as the preciousness of the spiritual enjoyments, he had aided them to choose and love, are more and more revealed to their experience through the successive stages of their endless progress? Oh what a prize to toil for, to have constantly recalled to our minds, in the blessed society of the future world, the memory of what we had worthily done for others in this, witnessing perpetually its fruits in the sublime and ever-spreading happiness, which God had made us his instruments to communicate.

I make an end of such reflections, because I know not where I should find one, and I have occupied my share of your time. You, dear Sir, understand, for you have tasted, the enjoyments, which attend on the exercise of this ministry. Happier auspices than

those, under which you are now resuming it, no man need, no reasonable man could, desire. I know your people better than I did, when, sixteen years ago yesterday, I was commissioned to their service, by prayer and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery; and I know that the best services you will render them will be no better than their desert, and that the lines of your service, falling among them, have indeed fallen to you in pleasant places. Wise counsels wait here to be blended with yours; a generous encouragement to animate your labors; those fervent prayers of righteous men, which avail much, to ascend with yours, and in your behalf. You are to find here no small disposition or ability to do whatever you shall be able to shew ought to be done. You are to have access to minds which hold close communion with the public mind, and are able to take the truth which you shall recommend to their acceptance, and send it forth widely on its beneficent way. You are welcomed to the confidence of pious spirits, old and young, to which it will be all happiness to minister; you are greeted, as their welcome associate and guide, by a company of children, rearing up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and rising around you to be a wall of fire on your right hand and your left; by a band of youth who understand one

another, who sympathize in high common objects, and are not unused to work together for the common good. What this people expect from their minister, is, that he shall care for their souls; the expectation which, I am persuaded, you most desire to find and to satisfy. May the Father of lights and of mercies prosper you, my brother, in the hopeful work you are undertaking, strengthen your hands, put wisdom in your mind, and a pure and lofty purpose in your heart, and fulfil for your usefulness and honor the warmest wishes which a christian affection could inspire.

Brethren of this beloved congregation, I am forbidden, in expressing my good wishes for you, to advert to circumstances of personal relation. This day is not mine. Its interest all belongs to another. I may not indulge myself in speaking of reasons, which make my interest in your happy prospects a feeling deeper in my heart, than any other feeling but those due to objects of the closest personal concern. May the living God bless you, my good friends; you and yours; each and all; with the blessings of time, and of preparation for eternity. May the best hopes of this day be, through his own peculiar grace, fully answered, and you and your minister be made each other's joy and bright crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus.

FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCHES.

BY THE REV. MR. FROTHINGHAM, OF BOSTON.

I am directed, Sir, by the churches assembled here, to extend to you the right hand of their fellowship. It is the hand of their own special fellowship, for from the church at large you have received it already. I do not ask you, then, to accept it,—as if it were a new thing,—but place it confidently in yours, as a sign of closer union, in a fraternity that had been acknowledged before. We welcome you to a more intimate participation of our religious cares; and we feel assured that we shall be met on your part by the same cordial sympathies that we bring. For you do not come to us with a stranger's face, and you do not bear with you a stranger's heart. You know us, and are known of us. We cannot salute you in the usual way of almost compassionate encouragement, as one who is approaching the work of an untried duty, or entering into the society of untried friends. We are too late to bid you welcome into the ministry of the great word. We are too

late to congratulate you,—if one may be allowed to speak so,—on your accession to an office, which can never permit a life of ease, however a vulgar opinion may show a growing boldness to consider it so,—not a life of ease, whatever else it may be. But we do welcome you to a church, that is not without a peculiar interest for your own feelings, while it is connected by many sacred associations with our own. We will congratulate you, that you are henceforth to fulfil your ministry among the scenes of your early attachments; in a community, that, if it requires much, rewards well,—that holds the servants of its altars in love and honor, and knows as well perhaps as any on earth both how to appreciate and how to excuse. We will congratulate you, that you have come here to be a successor to so many ready and considerate regards, to be a sharer with us and our brethren of privileges that are nowhere surpassed.

We will consult with you. We will coöperate with you. We will bring what aid we can to you, when you need aid. We will rejoice with you in your satisfactions. We will grieve with you, if you are put to disappointment and distress. This is the fellowship, that we offer, and that we expect.

Fellowship! The word is a monitory, as well as a brotherly one. If it is expressive of benevolent

affections, it implies something also of weakness and necessity. We unite that we may be befriended, comforted and strengthened. We should not desire alliance, if we felt sufficient of ourselves. But we are aware of having undertaken a wide and trying labor, and we therefore seek for associates;—we require fellow helpers; we ask for encouragement in the looks, the words, the different gifts, and the sustaining deeds of one another.

Fellowship! Important as it is, precious as it is, it must yet share in the precariousness and the perils of our other blessings. How insufficient and illusive will it be found, if we rely upon it too dependently! How dangerous, if we draw its delicate bonds into an oppressive closeness! How sorrowful, in many of its broken recollections, after they who were included in it have dropped away! But we will not so rely upon it; and we will not so strain upon it; and we will, by God's grace, so use this connexion and amity, that there shall be at least nothing to reproach us, when its ties may be loosened or its companions depart.

We stand together for mutual assistances. But how much there is in thought and life, that does not admit of being mutual;—how much, in which no mortal power can assist! The soul must dwell often

alone, and in some respects always alone. It has sorrows which it cannot communicate. It has exultations that it cannot express. It has responsibilities, in which it lives apart, and by which it must be judged apart. The stranger cannot enter into them, and the whole world is a stranger. Its conferences must be with itself. Its advices and its supports can come only from an invisible source.

I have even feared, that we are getting to lean too much on what is abroad. We live in an age of combinations, when nothing seems to be thought strong, unless it intricates itself with other things, that are to make it so ;—and God's work appears little, unless a great deal of man's work is with it ;—and some large apparatus is taken for the promise, if not for the evidence, of a large effect ;—and a power applied from without is apt to be put into the place and honors of that only real power, which must grow and be inspired from within. And I have feared, lest we might become too fond to be wise, and too ambitious to be safe, of a mere show of strength, which is so much the less likely to be substantial, as it is the most easily produced, and the most proudly displayed.

I may mistake in this ; and the apprehended evil may be only an imagination of my own, or at worst a passing accident of the time. But there is no room

for error in any thoughtful mind on the general principle,—that we must learn to seek our resources more in ourselves and from above, and less and less on what the friendly may wish, or the ingenious may devise, or the serviceable can execute. We are to do and suffer, for the most part, without earthly witnesses or aids.

Fellowship! It is a blessed advantage. We might be miserable without it. But far more miserable is it, to be able to contribute nothing to it from our own store, or to have laid up no other resource, amidst the transientness of time and beyond the power of fate.

What are the feeble connexions of any professional intercourse, let it be as endearing as it may, compared with the eternal relations that bind each single heart to the Sovereign Object of its love and duty and dread? We are passing away from a world, where we would not always abide, so hopelessly imperfect, and with an anxious task never done. And how hasty is this passing away of us and of our generations! The fellowship that is now solemnized, will presently be an old record, hardly worth being referred to; and the right hand, that now represents many, will leave no one behind, who is giving you with it his youthful prayers or his fatherly blessing. But

if there is any truth in what divine men have spoken, and dutiful men have believed;—if our preaching is not vain, and our faith vain;—if the record of hope is not a fraud from the beginning, and if the very pulses at our wrists do not throb to a splendid falsehood;—there is communion elsewhere, a glorious assembly that shall never be dispersed, a brotherhood with happy spirits.

APPENDIX.

ORIGINAL HYMN,

WRITTEN FOR THE INSTALLATION, BY THOMAS GRAY, M. D.

SUNG BY THE CHOIR OF BRATTLE STREET SOCIETY.

1 Lord ! bless the rite that gives, this hour
A shepherd to thy flock below,
To preach the Saviour's name with power,
And bid salvation's fountains flow.

2 Here may the hardened heart once more
Break its long sleep of sin and doubt ;
Until the smitten rock shall pour
The waters of repentance out.

3 Here may the weary, aching breast,
Seek peace from heaven,—oh ! not in vain,—
And the long wand'ring find a rest
Within the Saviour's fold again.

4 The crush'd flower on the fragrant sod
Drinks not in vain the dews of even !
Thus,—here, on earth's bruis'd flowers, O God,
Pour out the freshening dews of heaven.

5 Here may the grateful heart, to Thee
Swell its high praises, Holy One;
Till the wide earth shall bow the knee
Beneath the gospel of thy Son.

ORIGINAL HYMN,

WRITTEN BY THOMAS POWER, ESQ.

SUNG AT THE INSTALLATION DINNER.

1 O Thou! whose blessings kindly flow
The whole creation o'er,
Teach thy frail creatures here below
To worship and adore.

2 For all thy care in other years,
For all thy favors given,
Thy church with humble thanks appears,
And bears its thoughts to Heaven.

3 With reverence let the Saviour's name
Be borne on every tongue;
While worlds his praises shall proclaim,
In themes that angels sung.

4 Here let the messenger of peace
Declare thy holy will;
Let truth with brighter ray increase,
And love each bosom fill.

B.P.L. Bindery
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